

VOLUME 1 • WINTER • 2008



The Hawaii County Democrat

E komo mai!

While the development of the internet and the widespread use of email have made almost instant communication a reality for many people, it has often resulted in others being left out of the “information loop.” This newsletter, the post cards, and telephone calls you may occasionally receive from the Democratic Party are designed to help correct this problem.

We know it is important to stay in touch with our members and to try to keep you informed about the political issues and activities important to you. Thanks to a successful fund raiser in August we have the resources to send this newsletter. In this newsletter and in subsequent communications we hope to provide you the information needed so you will become actively involved with the Hawaii County Democratic Party. The Party and our Democracy depend on your active involvement in the affairs of our Party and our government. We hope these communications will serve to empower you to better fulfill that role.

To our knowledge this is the first Hawaii County Newsletter in several years—maybe the first ever. In this issue we

1. tell you about this year’s activities: 2007, the Year in Review,
2. give you a glimpse at next year, 2008, a preview,
3. describe a pilot outreach initiative, *Reach Out and Energize*,
4. ask you to complete and return the enclosed envelope that will enable us to serve you better, and
5. explain a lawsuit filed on behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawaii.

This last item addresses perhaps the most important function of the Party – empowering Party members to select candidates who support the principles of the Democratic Party and who will be accountable to their constituents.

We want your feedback. In addition to returning the enclosed envelope, please give us suggestions and comments about this newsletter. Suggest a name for the newsletter, topics to be covered, and most importantly, tell us what you would like to do to improve your Party.

Mahalo,

Chair, Democratic Party of Hawaii County

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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN THE HAWAII COUNTY DEMOCRATS, PLEASE VISIT US AT

hawaiicountydemocrats.org



2007, The Year In Review

2007 was not an election year, but it has still been a busy political year. Early in the year the Hawaii County Committee shared our Party Platform and Resolutions with our elected Legislators and County Council members. This was our first step to make certain that our elected officials are aware of the positions adopted at our County and State Conventions. We plan to continue this effort and to improve upon it in future years.

One of our very successful annual events has been the Hawaii County Democratic Parties Independence Day (Family Reunion) Picnic and Parade in Kailua-Kona. This year was no exception. Three hundred Democrats from across the Big Island joined Mike McCartney (DPH Chair) and a throng of our elected politicians (Dan Akaka, Cindy Evans, Josh Green, Colleen Hanabusa, Pete Hoffman, Angel Pilago, Jay Kimura, et.al.). This family affair featured the camaraderie, fun, food and entertainment of an "old-fashioned" July 4 picnic but also included special children's activities and over \$1,000 in 25 various door

prizes. Following the picnic 50 Democrats, including many of our elected officials, marched in the Kailua-Kona Independence Day Parade. Thanks to the donors, all the participants and the many volunteers.

On August 28 the Hawaii County Democratic Party sponsored a fund raiser at the estate of a generous fellow Democrat in Holualoa. Senator Daniel Inouye was our featured guest, and he was joined by Congressmen Neil Abercrombie and Michael Thompson (1st District, California), several State legislators, County Councilmen, and other -officials. The setting, food, refreshments, entertainment, camaraderie and political discourse contributed to a wonderful event which netted \$20,000 to help pay for next years' Party expenses. Thanks to our host, the many volunteers, and the 100 donors for their gracious generosity.

On November 25 Pete Hoffman, Chairperson of the Hawaii County Council, hosted a major HCC event at his home in Waikoloa.

The Democratic Party invited the Democratic candidates for mayor to meet with Democrats from West and North Hawaii (basically, Senate District 3). Candidates Billy Kenoi and Angel Pilago attended and were joined by State Representative Josh Green (D) who has announced his candidacy for State Senate District 3. Former Congressman Ed Case also attended this event and moderated a lively discussion among the 3 candidates. Thanks to the 50 local Democrats who attended and we look forward to continuing our work with you next year.

Districts 4 and 6 made noteworthy efforts to reach out to their communities in 2007 and their efforts might serve as models to other Districts. Each month District 4 has a Democratic Party table at the Maku'u Farmers' Market. The table has become a hot spot of political conversation and a place where District 4 Democrats share information about the Democratic Party. In addition to its leadership role in organizing the July 4 picnic and August fundraising events, District 6 has been holding a series of Sunday af-



ternoon discussions with the candidates for mayor. Those discussions are scheduled to extend into 2008.

This year the HCC rotated its quarterly meetings among Hilo, Captain Cook, Keaau, and Honoka'a. On November 17 the Hawaii Democratic Party State Central Committee (SCC) held its regular meeting in Kailua-Kona, marking its first Big Island meeting in several years—or perhaps it was the first ever. This is part of the effort to have the SCC meetings rotate among the Counties as required by the General Laws of the Party.

Well, this is a snapshot sample of what we did in 2007, and I hope it was enough to pique your interest. If you really want to know what happened (or if you want different things to happen), we hope you will make a New Year's resolution to "get involved" with the Democratic Party in 2008. Help us do better!

Reach Out and Energize

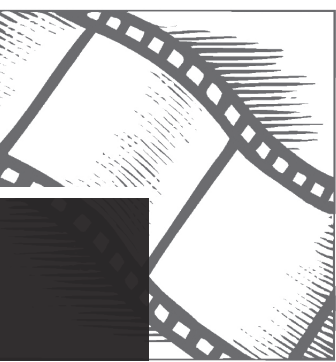
Have you ever left a movie theater full of insight and inspired to take action? How about "Sicko" or "An Inconvenient Truth"?

The Hawaii County Committee is looking for ways to "engage" our members in some of the big issues of our time and we will work with our local Precinct and District officers to find ways to "reach out and energize" interested citizens.

Our first effort at this will be to bring provocative and award winning political documentaries to local meetings of Democrats. When possible we will supplement the movies with political leaders and activists who can help translate our energy into real public policy. In short we want to use some thought-provoking, issue oriented, but entertaining movies to stimulate discussion and action among progressive Democrats. We would like to show the movies on a periodic basis at different locations on the Big Island. The Hawaii County Committee would co-sponsor the events with local precincts/Districts and the HCC would cover most of the costs. Movies could be shown in homes or public places, and we would hope to get audiences ranging from 10 to 50 people. Later in the year we might sponsor a public film fest.

What do you think? Would you be interested in participating? Do you have a topic? A video? Or a guest speaker that you would suggest?

Address questions or suggestions to programs@hawaiicountydemocrats.org.



Hawaii's Unjust Election Laws Stymie Voter Participation

Delegates to the 2006 Democratic Party of Hawaii (DPH) State Convention overwhelmingly adopted Article 1 Section 1 of our Democratic Party General Law. It states:

- The Primary election "ought to be open to participation of only such persons as are willing to declare their affiliation with and support for the Party, either through public registration to vote, or through maintenance of membership in the Party."
- "The State Central Committee and Party Chairperson shall take appropriate action to correct this injustice."

On December 16, 2006, the State Central Committee of the DPH passed a resolution to file a lawsuit "to correct this injustice." The resolution appointed "attorney Anthony Gill to recruit and assemble a legal team to represent the Party in this litigation."

At the November 17 meeting of the SCC, opponents of the resolution attempted to have the resolution rescinded. That vote failed and the decision to move forward with the lawsuit to bring Hawaii's election laws into compliance with the United States Constitution was thereby reaffirmed by the SCC.

The following letter was written by Richard Port, Democratic National Committeeman from Hawaii

Shush!! Please don't tell anyone! Hawaii's Primary Election Law is unconstitutional. In the year 2000, four political parties in California challenged the constitutionality of a proposition that would have converted California's primary election law from one in which persons who are members of a political party select their nominee to a primary in which anyone could vote in any Party's primary. The United States Supreme Court ruled that California's blanket primary system was unconstitutional because it violated the First Amendment (California vs Jones).

This year the U.S. District Court for Arizona, citing the Supreme Court's California ruling, permanently enjoined Arizona's Secretary of State from allowing voters who are not registered as Libertarians from casting a ballot in any Libertarian Primary (Arizona Libertarian Party, Inc. vs Brewer).

So why is there reluctance to change Hawaii's Primary Election law? FEAR! Many elected officials, both Democrats and Republicans, like the current unconstitutional law.

Democrats already have a super-majority in both the State Senate and the State House of Representatives. Why change it? Also, there is fear that if Democrats propose a change in our unconstitutional primary system, voters will see it as a power grab by elected Democrats, not as correction to an unconstitutional system. Republicans, on the other hand, like the current system because they can mess with the Democratic Primary election by helping to nominate the weakest Democrat to run in the General Election, namely candidates who are most likely to be defeated by Republicans in the General Election.

The current system is much like allowing the Georgia football team to select which quarterback will run the offense for Hawaii's football team in the Sugar Bowl, or like allowing owners of the union busting Pacific Beach Hotel to select who will be the head of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 142, or allowing the representative of the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce to select the head of the Hawaii Government Employees Association.

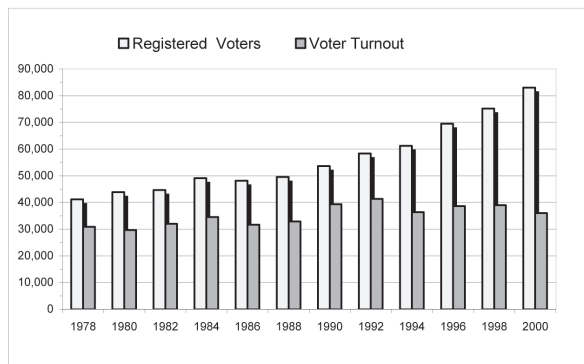
Why are we speaking up when it would be easier to let the current unconstitutional system go unchallenged? Because we believe that Primary Elections are intended to nominate the candidate who best represents the values and principles of their respective Parties. We want to have Democrats nominate candidates who are willing to stand up for the values and principles our Democratic Party members hold most dear. We believe this is both a right and responsibility of our Party and our members.

- Richard Port, Democratic National Committeeman from Hawaii

MYTH: Hawaii's non-Party primary encourages voters.

FACT: Between 1978 to 2000 Primary voting dropped from 74.6 to 41.7% of eligible voters.

COUNTY OF HAWAII			
Year	Registered Voters	Voter Turnout	% of Turnout
1978	41,149	30,875	75.0%
1980	43,843	29,658	67.6%
1982	44,622	31,993	71.7%
1984	49,077	34,545	70.4%
1986	48,166	31,636	65.7%
1988	49,510	32,921	66.5%
1990	53,604	39,347	73.4%
1992	58,331	41,296	70.8%
1994	61,224	36,377	59.4%
1996	69,530	38,648	55.6%
1998	75,205	38,988	51.8%
2000	83,052	36,027	43.4%



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2008: A Preview of Coming Events

“Now is the time for all good Democrats to come to the aid of their Party.”

2008 is a presidential election year, and it brings with it a high level of political excitement and a lot of work. We have lived with almost eight years of regressive Republican failures and fiascos: an ill-conceived and disastrously executed war on Iraq; tax cuts for the wealthy coupled with astronomical budget deficits and national debt; a crumbling infrastructure; soaring health care costs; and a shrinking middle class. It is time for a change of national policies and national leadership, and the Hawaii County Democratic Party is prepared to help deliver a resounding victory in November. The following events constitute a roadmap to November and the inauguration of a Democratic President in January of 2009.

- On February 19, 2008, every precinct in every District in the State of Hawaii will meet to hold its Precinct Organizing Meeting and its Presidential preference poll. Selection of delegates to the County and State Conventions will be made at these meetings. Only members of the Democratic Party may participate in these Precinct meetings and a postcard giving the address and other details will be sent to all members about a week before the meeting. The Precinct meeting will be led by a Precinct officer, and training will be provided to those leaders in January. If you would like to help, please indicate your interest on the questionnaire included with this newsletter. For a more complete description of these meetings please visit our website at www.hawaiicountydemocrats.org.
- Pre-convention meeting in Honokaa: Hawaii County Committees complete their work at this meeting, so packages can be prepared for convention use. Joe Clarkson (Hamakua) is chairperson of the Convention Planning Committee. Dolly Strazar (Hilo) and Patricia Stolfa (Kona) are serving as co-chairs of the Rules Committee. Denny Coffman (Kona) and Steve Sparks (Puna) are co-chairing the Resolutions Committee. Lionel Kutner (Captain Cook), assisted by Ann Gleason (Volcano) and Herb Dorsey (Puna) will lead the Platform Committee. Volunteers are needed for all committees, particularly Platform and Resolutions. Please contact your District Chair or one of the Committee Chairs if you would like to volunteer. Visit our website for more information.
- The Hawaii County Convention will be held on May 3, 2008 (location to be announced). Delegates to the County and State Conventions are chosen at the Precinct Organizing Meetings.
- The State Convention will be held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Honolulu from May 23 to May 25, 2008. Delegates to the State Convention are chosen at the Precinct Organizing Meetings on February 19, 2008.
- July 4 Picnic and Parade in Kailua-Kona, featuring Democratic candidates for significant offices at the State and County level.
- The Primary Election will be held on Saturday, September 20. You may also vote by absentee mail-in or absentee walk-in. A Grand Rally is expected to be held at the Mooheau Bandstand in Hilo the night before the Primary.
- A Unity Breakfast will be held the morning following the Primary Election.
- The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2008. You may also vote by absentee mail-in or walk-in. A Grand Rally is expected to be held at the Mooheau Bandstand in Hilo sometime before the General Election.